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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/671,082	09/26/2003	Paul B. Stollenwerk	903-00168	6288

7590 06/06/2006  
Peter T. Holsen  
ANDRUS, SCEALES, STARKE & SAWALL, LLP  
100 East Wisconsin Avenue  
Suite 1100  
Milwaukee, WI 53202-4178

EXAMINER
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SLACK, NAKO N

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3635

DATE MAILED: 06/06/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

**Office Action Summary**

Application No.

10/671,082

Applicant(s)

STOLLENWERK ET AL.

Examiner

Naoko Slack

Art Unit

3635

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 8/19/2004.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-13 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-8 and 11-13 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 9 and 10 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)  | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)   | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)             |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>8/19/2004</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____  |

## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Information Disclosure Statement***

The information disclosure statement filed August 19, 2004 fails to comply with 37 CFR 1.98(a)(2), which requires a legible copy of each cited foreign patent document; each non-patent literature publication or that portion which caused it to be listed; and all other information or that portion which caused it to be listed. It has been placed in the application file, but the information referred to therein has not been considered.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112***

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 2-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 2 recites that the upper and lower rails are mounted to a mounting surface, which is a positive recitation of the combination of rails with the mounting surface. The preamble is drawn to a paneling assembly comprising a panel and rails, not including the mounting surface. Therefore, it is unclear if applicant intended to claim the combination of the paneling assembly with the mounting surface or the sub-combination of the paneling assembly alone. If the combination was intended, the preamble must be amended to reflect this fact. Clarification is required.

For purposes of examination, it has been assumed that the applicant intended to claim the sub-combination of the paneling assembly alone.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-5, 11-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by US Patent 3,745,704 to Covington.

Claim 1:

Covington discloses a paneling assembly comprising an elongated panel (20), a lower rail (16) defining a lower recess and an upper rail (18) defining an upper recess, the upper recess being deeper than the lower recess, the upper and lower recesses spaced apart a distance greater than the distance between the upper and lower edge portions such that the panel is removably retained in the recesses when supported by the bottom rail (column 2, lines 1-8).

Claims 2 and 5:

The upper and lower rails are mounted to a mounting surface with fasteners (56).

Claim 3:

The upper rail comprises a downwardly extending lip (46) which forms the recess with the rear mounting surface (42).

Art Unit: 3635

Claim 4:

The lower rail comprises an upwardly extending lip (30) which forms the recess with the rear mounting surface (22).

Claims 11-13:

Covington discloses the method of applying a paneling to a mounting surface comprising the steps of providing an elongated panel member (20), providing a lower rail (16) defining a recess and an upper rail (18) defining a recess, the upper recess being deeper than the lower recess, and mounting the upper rail and lower rail on a mounting surface with fasteners (56), the panel member removably retained in the recesses when supported by the bottom rail (column 2, lines 1-8).

Claims 1, 6 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by US Patent 5,426,893 to Hoffman.

Claim 1:

Hoffman discloses a paneling assembly comprising an elongated panel (18), a lower rail (13) defining a lower recess and an upper rail (12) defining an upper recess, the upper recess being deeper than the lower recess, the upper and lower recesses spaced apart a distance greater than the distance between the upper and lower edge portions such that the panel is removably retained in the recesses when supported by the bottom rail.

Claim 6:

The panel member further comprises at least one longitudinal side having a lip (20) for mating with an adjacent panel member.

Claim 7:

The panel member comprises at least one chamfered edge (25).

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claim 8 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over US Patent 3,745,704 to Covington.

Claim 8:

While Covington discloses that the panel may be formed of wood (column 3, line 47), Covington does not specify that the wood is cedar. However, it would have been a matter of design choice to use cedar, as Covington states that the panel may be made of any suitable material (column 3, lines 52-53).

### ***Allowable Subject Matter***

Claims 9 and 10 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

***Contact Information***

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Naoko Slack whose current telephone number is 571-272-6848. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri (6:00 am-2:30pm).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Carl D. Friedman can be reached on 571-272-6842. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Naoko Slack  
Primary Examiner  
Art Unit 3635

NS  
May 25, 2006